

~~SECRET~~

NBC BRIEFING

25 May 1954

ATTACHMENT:

THE RIO DE JANEIRO TREATY

I. The Rio Treaty (officially the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance) was signed in 1947 and now has 20 active participants. (Guatemala has ratified but has not deposited)

A. The Treaty is the major security and peace instrument of the hemisphere. It provides joint machinery for meeting armed attacks, unarmed aggression and other threats to signatory countries.

B. Action taken under the Treaty must be approved by two-thirds of the signatories (14 votes) in all cases. Parties to a dispute cannot vote but this rule does not alter the two-thirds rule. All action must have 14 votes.

C. Action taken or contemplated under the Treaty must be reported to the UN.

II. The Honduran request for US assistance under the terms of the Rio Treaty has no precedent.

DOCUMENT NO. 23
CLASSIFICATION LI
X RECLASSIFIED
DATE 10/10/80 BY TS G C
REVIEW DATE 10/10/80
REVIEWER 8.90

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

A. No such unilateral action has been taken previously.

B. In the absence of an armed attack, any request for assistance would normally go to the Council of the Organization of American States. The Council would then

de decide whether to activate the treaty.

C. The Treaty specifically states that it does not abridge the right of any country to defend itself against attack. It also states that other contracting parties may assist the defender prior to joint OAS action in case of an armed attack.

D. It is possible that Honduras envisages US assistance in the present situation as an extension of the right of self-defense against an armed attack.

3.

~~SECRET~~